

Proposal for the:

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ARQUITECTONICS NETWORK: MIND, LAND AND SOCIETY

Innovative and Interdisciplinary Research by Design: Education, Architecture and Social Planning Participation

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Main Topic of Presentation:

4. Ethnographies in the studios, Phenomenology, Social Dialogy

Title of Proposed Presentation:

Observing Juries in Architectural Competitions: Advantages and Paradoxes

Abstract:

For socio-anthropologist Jean-Pierre Boutinet, the architecture *project* reveals theoretical problems with respect to the complexity of anticipating the form of a place through ‘design thinking’ (2012). We consider the project as a set of traces and indices of design thinking and of reflexive practices embedded within the epistemology of ‘how professionals think in action’ (Schön, 1983). In a design competition, projects are meant to be compared.

Competitions, along with the design projects that are generated through this normally transparent device, are therefore understood as epistemological filters, revealing phenomenological situations, allowing the study of interdisciplinary issues related to contemporary design projects (Chupin et al., 2015; Anderson, et al, 2013; Ronn et al, 2010; Collyer & Berk, 2004). Some competitions act as controversial moments, while others, as experimental moments in the design disciplines (Yaneva, 2012; Lipstadt, 1989, 1991).

Recent work in competitions studies shows that from the construction of the brief, to the realization of the winning project, competitions are true communication platforms (Van Wezemael, 2011) however, these communicative exchanges, these qualitative judgments, also emphasize the value systems of the various stakeholders with regards to design quality as a whole (Cucuzzella & Chupin, 2013). In this sense, the competition situation requires both a multiplicity of views and a representative mix of disciplinary expertise of practitioners (Chupin & Cucuzzella, 2011; Kreiner et al, 2011; Tostrup, 1999; Spreiregen, 1979). So competitions represent exemplar comparable situations. Specifically, observations of jury deliberations help better understand how architecture project representations are interpreted and how the social interdisciplinary and cognitive origins of the jurors help in the production of knowledge through the process of qualitative judgment.

In fact, rather than viewing judgment as a separate process from design, jurors may be considered the re-designers of the potential winning project. From this point of view, the judgment process requires jurors to converge on a project, to the point where they can appropriate it and make it theirs in a common decision. Since the winner is the «product» of the judgment process, it follows that the product is the «project of the jury», as if the jury had designed it (Chupin 2011).

Given the richness of competition juries as exemplary epistemological devices, how can the jury process contribute to research-by-design through the process of deliberation? How can we best observe and transcribe this process? How can this paradox of transparency in a competition jury be overcome? Drawing on empirical observations of competition juries in the Canadian context, this presentation focuses on the advantages and paradoxes of the transparency of the competition jury in this construction of knowledge.

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